

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

**Please amend the Claims so as to read as follows:**

1. (Withdrawn) A data distribution system, comprising:
  - a plurality of data sources each capable of transmitting a data item; and
  - a data vending machine capable of receiving the data item from said plurality of data sources and selling the received data item to a user; wherein said data vending machine includes
  - a data selecting apparatus operated by a user to select a desired data item,
  - a data source selecting apparatus connected to said data selecting apparatus, and selecting, among said plurality of data sources, that one holding the data item selected by said data selecting apparatus, in accordance with a specific standard,
  - a data receiving apparatus connected to said data source selecting apparatus and receiving said selected data item from the data source selected by said data source selecting apparatus, and
  - a data updating apparatus to which an external storage device is detachably mounted, for writing the data item received by said data receiving apparatus to said external storage device.

2. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 1, wherein  
said data vending machine includes  
a data information table connected to said data source selecting  
apparatus, storing information specifying a desired data item, a  
size of each data item, and information specifying a data source  
holding each data item, and  
a data rate table connected to said data source selecting apparatus,  
storing rate of data transmission from said plurality of data  
sources to said data vending machine; and  
said data source selecting apparatus selects that data source by which  
time necessary for reception of the selected data item becomes the  
shortest, by making reference to said data information table and  
said data rate table.
  
3. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 2, wherein  
said data information table further stores price information of each said  
data item;  
said data vending machine further includes a clock specifying a present  
time;  
said data updating apparatus has a function of storing in said external  
storing medium, information specifying time obtained by referring  
to said clock when a data item is written to said external storage  
medium and the price information of the data item;  
said data vending machine further includes a charging apparatus for  
charging for the data item already recorded on said external  
storage medium to the user, based on the price information of the  
data item already recorded on said external storage medium at the  
time of writing the data to said external storage medium by said  
data updating apparatus, the time of writing of the last data item  
to said external storage medium recorded on said external storage  
medium, and on the time obtained by referring to said clock.

4. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 2, wherein  
said data information table further stores price information of each said  
data item;  
said data distribution system further comprising a data reproducing  
apparatus for reproducing a data item by mounting said external  
storage medium,  
said data reproducing apparatus including means for recording  
information related to reproduction of said data item in said  
external storage medium every time said external storage medium  
is mounted and a data item is reproduced; wherein  
said data vending machine further includes a charging apparatus  
charging for the data item already recorded on said external  
storage medium to the user, based on the price information of the  
data item already recorded on said external storage medium at the  
time of writing data to said external storage medium by said data  
updating apparatus, and on the information related to  
reproduction of said data item already recorded on said external  
storage medium, recorded on said external storage medium.
  
5. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 1, wherein said  
data vending machine further includes a data buffering apparatus for  
temporarily storing a received data item, and  
said data source selecting apparatus handles said data buffering  
apparatus as one of said plurality of data sources.

6. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 1, wherein each of said plurality of data sources repeatedly transmits data items; said data vending machine further includes a transmission schedule table connected to said data source selecting apparatus, storing a transmission schedule of data items by said plurality of data sources; and said data source selecting apparatus receives a data item by selecting a data source from which said selected data item can be received at the earliest timing, among said plurality of data sources, by making a reference to said transmission schedule table.
7. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 6, wherein said plurality of data sources determine distribution of time allocated to transmission of each data item in accordance with a predetermined standard.
8. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 7, wherein said plurality of data sources determine distribution of time allocated to transmission of each data item, as a function of frequency of selection of each data item by said selecting apparatus.
9. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 8, wherein said plurality of data sources divide each data item to a plurality of blocks and transmits time-divisionally in accordance with said time distribution respectively, and said data receiving apparatus receives and integrates the plurality of blocks corresponding to said selected data item to restore said selected data item.

10. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 6, wherein  
said plurality of data sources divide each data item into a plurality  
of blocks and transmits time-divisionally, and  
said data receiving apparatus receives and integrates the plurality  
of blocks corresponding to said selected data item to restore  
said selected data item.
11. (Withdrawn) The data distribution system according to claim 1, further  
comprising a vendor distributing non-electronic data, at least  
capable of receiving transmission of information from said data  
vending machine; wherein  
said data selecting apparatus is capable of selecting said  
vendor as one of the data sources and designating a  
non-electronic data desired by a user; and  
said data receiving apparatus has a function of transmitting  
information specifying said non-electronic data to the  
vendor selected by said data selecting apparatus,  
and transmitting information including specific  
contents of processing to be performed on said non-  
electronic data.

12. (Withdrawn) A data searching apparatus, comprising:
  - a storage device storing a plurality of data items as a set of partial data items structured in a hierarchy of one or a plurality of levels;
  - a search condition setting apparatus operated by a user to set a search condition desired by the user and desired level of said one or the plurality of levels from which retrieval is desired by the user;
  - a searching apparatus searching said storage device in accordance with the search condition set by said search condition setting apparatus, and retrieving a partial data item matching said search condition on the level set by said user; and
  - a writing apparatus to which an external storage device is detachably mounted, for writing said partial data item retrieved by said searching apparatus to said external storage device.

13. (Withdrawn) A copied data detecting system, comprising

- a data reproducing apparatus to which an external storage medium is mounted, for reproducing a data item recorded on said external storage medium; and
- a data checking apparatus connected by communication to said data reproducing apparatus, for determining whether the external storage medium mounted on said data reproducing apparatus and of which reproduction is instructed has a data copied without authorization recorded thereon; wherein
- in a normal state of use, each said external storage medium has a unique authentication data allocated and recorded thereon, said authentication data being copied as it is to an external storage medium copied without authorization;
- said data reproducing apparatus includes a reproducing apparatus to which said external storage medium is mountable, for reproducing a data item recorded on said external storage medium in response to an instruction of reproduction,
- a reproduction switch instructing reproduction of the data item to said reproducing apparatus, and
- means responsive to an operation of said reproduction switch for transmitting the authentication data recorded on said external storage medium to said data checking apparatus; and

said data checking apparatus includes  
    a data management table recording the authentication data  
        transmitted from said data reproduction apparatus for  
        managing authentication data of the external storage  
        medium which is being reproduced, and  
    determining means for determining, by determining whether the  
        authentication data transmitted from said data reproducing  
        apparatus already exists in said data management table or  
        not, whether the external storage medium mounted on said  
        data reproducing apparatus is an unauthorized copy or not.

14. (Withdrawn) The copied data detecting system according to claim 13,  
    wherein

    said data checking apparatus further includes means responsive  
        to determination by said determining means that said  
        external storage medium mounted on said data reproducing  
        apparatus is an unauthorized copy, for transmitting a  
        reproduction-prohibited signal to said data reproducing  
        apparatus; and  
    said data reproducing apparatus further includes means  
        responsive to said reproduction-prohibited signal for  
        stopping reproduction of the data on said external storage  
        medium by said reproducing apparatus.

15. (Withdrawn) The copied data detecting system according to claim 13,  
wherein

    said data reproducing apparatus further includes an end switch  
    used by a user for instructing end of data reproduction,  
    and

    means responsive to an operation of said end switch for  
    transmitting the authentication data recorded on said  
    external storage medium together with information  
    indicating end of reproduction to said data checking  
    apparatus; and

    said data checking apparatus includes means responsive to said  
    signal indicating end of reproduction for deleting the  
    corresponding authentication data from said data  
    management table.

16. (Withdrawn) A copied data detecting system comprising  
    a data reproducing apparatus to which an external storage  
    medium is mounted for reproducing a data item recorded  
    on said external storage medium; and  
    a data checking apparatus connected by communication to said  
    data reproducing apparatus for determining whether said  
    external storage medium mounted on said data reproducing  
    apparatus and of which reproduction is instructed has a  
    data copied without authorization recorded thereon;  
    wherein  
    in a normal state of use, a unique authentication data is allocated  
    to and recorded on each of said external storage medium,  
    said authentication data being copied as it is to an external  
    storage medium copied without authorization;

said data reproducing apparatus includes

a reproducing apparatus to which said external storage medium is mountable, for reproducing a data item recorded on said external storage medium in response to an instruction of reproduction,

a reproduction switch instructing reproduction of the data item to said reproducing apparatus, and

transmitting means responsive to an operation of said reproduction switch for transmitting the authentication data recorded on said external storage medium to said data checking apparatus repeatedly in accordance with a prescribed transmission pattern; and

said data checking apparatus includes

a data management table recording the authentication data transmitted from said data reproducing apparatus and time of transmission, for managing the authentication data of the external storage medium which is being reproduced, and

determining means responsive to the authentication data transmitted from said data reproducing apparatus, for determining, based on the record of said data management table and time of transmission of present authentication data, whether the external storage medium mounted on said data reproducing apparatus is an unauthorized copy.

17. (Withdrawn) The copied data detecting system according to claim 16, wherein said transmission means starts repeated transmission of said authentication data to said data checking apparatus after a prescribed time period in response to an operation of said reproduction switch, and said prescribed time period is selected to be a predetermined time period longer than a time interval of said repeated transmission.

18. (Withdrawn) A copied data detecting system comprising:

- a data vending machine allowing mounting of an external storage medium and selling data to a holder of said external storage medium by writing a data item to said external storage medium or updating a data item recorded on said external storage medium; and
- a data checking apparatus connected by communication to said data vending machine for determining whether the external storage medium mounted on said data vending machine has data copied without authorization recorded thereon; wherein
- in a normal state of use, a unique authentication data is allotted to and recorded on each of said external storage medium, said authentication data being copied as it is to an external storage medium copied without authorization; and

said data vending machine includes

- a data updating apparatus in which an external storage medium is detachably mountable, for writing a data item designated by a user to said external storage medium,
- data management table managing data by recording authentication data of an external storage medium of which use is prohibited, and
- means responsive to mounting of said external storage medium to said data updating apparatus, for reading said authentication data of said external storage medium, determining whether said authentication data corresponds to the prohibited use by making a reference to said management table, and controlling an operation of said data updating apparatus in accordance with the result of determination.

19. (Withdrawn) The copied data detecting system according to claim 18,  
wherein

said data vending machine further includes means responsive to the determination by said control means that said authentication data is not for the data of which use is prohibited, adding said authentication data to said data management table, and updating authentication code of said external storage medium by generating a new unique authentication code.

20. (Currently Amended) A data reproducing apparatus for reproducing digital data stored on storage media, said digital data including reproducing apparatus specifying information for specifying an apparatus capable of reproduction, comprising:

- a housing containing:
  - (i) a storage apparatus storing reproduction apparatus ID information unique to said reproducing apparatus;
  - (ii) means for reading out said digital data from said storage media, wherein said media includes a data region storing said reproducing apparatus specifying information;
  - (iii) a first determining apparatus determining whether said reproducing apparatus is capable of reproducing said digital data from said reproduction apparatus ID information and said reproducing apparatus specifying information;
  - (iv) a control apparatus enabling or disabling reproduction of said digital data by said reproducing apparatus dependent on the result of determination by said first determining apparatus; and
  - (v) a CPU directly controlling the manner of operation of said storage apparatus, said first determining apparatus, and said control apparatus as well as the reproduction of said digital data enabled by said control apparatus as audio and/or video signals.

21. (Previously Presented) The data reproducing apparatus according to claim 20, wherein

    said digital data includes display data to be reproduced visually;  
    and

    said reproducing apparatus comprises a display  
    apparatus for visually reproducing and displaying said  
    digital data.

22. (Previously Presented) The data reproducing apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising an ID information input apparatus responsive to determination by said first determining apparatus that said reproducing apparatus is not a reproducing apparatus capable of reproducing said digital data, urging a user to enter a reproducing apparatus ID information.

23. (Previously Presented) The data reproducing apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising

    a second determining apparatus determining whether the data  
    reproducing apparatus specified by the reproducing  
    apparatus ID information input by said ID information  
    input apparatus is a reproducing apparatus capable of  
    reproducing said digital data; wherein  
    said control apparatus enables or disables reproduction of digital  
    data by said reproducing apparatus dependent on the  
    result of determination by said second determining  
    apparatus.

24. (Previously Presented) The data reproducing apparatus according to claim 23, further comprising:

an update selecting apparatus responsive to the determination by said second determining apparatus that the data reproducing apparatus specified by the reproducing apparatus ID information input by said ID information input apparatus is a reproduction apparatus capable of reproducing said digital data, allowing the user to select whether said reproducing apparatus specifying information is to be updated by said input reproducing apparatus ID information; and

an updating apparatus responsive to the selection by said update selecting apparatus that said reproducing apparatus specifying information is to be updated by said input reproducing apparatus ID information, updating said reproducing apparatus specifying information by said input reproducing apparatus ID information.

25. (Currently Amended) A data reproducing apparatus for reproducing digital data stored on at least one external storage medium, said digital data including external storage medium specifying information for specifying an external storage medium, ~~and said external storage medium corresponding to external storage medium identification information allocated uniquely to each external storage medium in advance, said reproducing apparatus comprising:~~

a housing; and

at least one external storage medium mounted on said housing, each of said at least one external storage medium storing external storage medium identification information unique to itself; wherein said housing contains:

- (i) means for reading out said digital data stored on at least one of said at least one external storage medium, wherein said each of said at least one external storage medium includes a data region storing external storage medium specifying information;
- (ii) a first determining apparatus determining whether said external storage medium specifying information included in said digital data satisfies a prescribed relation with said external storage medium identification information;
- (iii) a control apparatus for enabling or disabling reproduction of the digital data by said reproducing apparatus dependent on the result of determination by said first determining apparatus; and
- (iv) a CPU directly controlling the manner of operation of said means for reading out said digital data stored on at least one of said at least one external storage medium, said first determining apparatus, and said control apparatus as well as the reproduction of said digital data enabled by said control apparatus as audio and/or video signals.

26. (Previously Presented) The data reproducing apparatus according to claim 25, wherein

    said digital data includes display data to be reproduced visually; and

    said reproducing apparatus comprising a display apparatus for visually reproducing and displaying said digital data.

27. (Previously Presented) The data reproducing apparatus according to claim 20, wherein

    said reproducing apparatus specifying information is recorded when reproduction is first performed by the data reproducing apparatus.

28. (Previously Presented) The data reproducing apparatus according to claim 20, wherein

    said reproducing apparatus specifying information is recorded when digital data is sold.

29. (Withdrawn) A display apparatus reproducing and displaying digital data including reproducing apparatus specifying information specifying an apparatus capable of reproduction and copy permission information, comprising: copy permission determining means for reading said copy permission information and for determining whether copying of said digital data is permitted or not;

ID information determining means for determining whether the display apparatus is capable of reproducing said digital data from display apparatus ID information unique to said display apparatus and said reproducing apparatus specifying information; and  
display control means for controlling display and non-display of said digital data dependent on the result of determination by said copy permission determining means and said ID information determining means.

30. (Withdrawn) The display apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said display control means controls the display such that the digital data is displayed regardless of the result of determination by said ID information determining means, when it is determined by said copy permission determining means that copying of said digital data is permitted.